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Foreign proper names in Russian radio and TV broadcasts

The choice of an accentual or pronouncing variant of a borrowed proper name poses a serious problem for journalists, who have to decide upon the choice of a variant while on air. This problem is just as serious for codifiers, the compilers of pronouncing dictionaries used by radio and TV journalists.

As part of research prior to the publication of the “Dictionary of Accentuation of the Russian Language” (“Словарь ударений русского языка”, Ageenko/Zarva 2000), a good number of people representing various social groups were questioned regarding the word *Эдинбург* [Edinburgh]. When asked to name the capital of Scotland, the majority of informants typically said something like this: ‘Actually, the correct pronunciation of the name of this city is *Эдинбург* [Edinburgh], because this is what it sounds like in English’. But then, somewhat apologetically they would add, ‘But in Russian we say *ЭдинбУрг* [EdinbUrgh]’. We believe that such an approach is incorrect. We should not be ashamed of the Russian language. It is normal for it to overhaul a foreign word applying its internal standards. Any word, when being borrowed by another language, undergoes a process of assimilation, including accentual assimilation. In the case of *Эдинбург* [Edinburgh] the word was slightly changed to match the existing accentual pattern visible in words like *Петербург*, *Оренбург*, *Шлиссельбург*, *Екатеринбург* [Petersburg, Orenburg, Shlisselburg, Ekaterinburg]. When searching for correctness in the Russian language, one should not wander beyond its limits. This principle should definitely be applied to proper names of foreign origin, whose representation in encyclopedias and linguistic dictionaries is based upon the pronouncing standards of the languages where these words came from, even though their accentual patterns have become deeply rooted in the Russian tradition. A number of reference books for media professionals apply what we may call an etymological approach, which prompts them to recommend certain variants which are not in compliance with the traditions of the Russian language. For instance: *Арлингтонское кладбище* [Arlingtonskoe kladbische], *Леонард БЕРнстайн* [Leonard BERNstain], *МАрлон БрАндо* [MARlon BrAndo], *Невилл ЧЕмберлен* [Nevill ChEmberlen] (cf. “Наш ответ *ЧемберлЕну*” [‘Nash otvet ChemberlEnu’] – slogan ‘Our answer to Chamberlain’). According to the “Big Encyclopedic Dictionary” (“Большой энциклопедический

словарь”, Prokhorov (ed.) 1998), the Russian pronunciation for the capital of the USA is **ВАшингтон** [Vashington]. The reference book “Russian Speech on Air” (“Русская речь в эфире”, Ivanova/Cherkasova 2000) presents this variant in bold type as the predominant one, whereas the traditional Russian **ВашингтОн** [VashingtOn] is given in brackets in a modest bleak font.

The “Dictionary of Accentuation” (Ageenko/Zarva 2000) had more than 2000 (at a modest estimate) revised recommendations compared to its own earlier edition printed in 1993 (Ageenko/Zarva 1993). The phonetics of a language cannot, of course, change at such speed, even at times of great social changes. The vast number of corrections is explained by the fact that earlier editions would typically give preference to accentual variants, which violate the tradition of the Russian language and culture, for example: **БАлатон** [Balaton], **ВИсбаден** [Visbaden], **Джон ГОлсуорси** [Dzhon GOlsuorsi], **Иоганн ГУтенберг** Iogann [GUtenberg], **Карл Густав МАНнергейм** [Karl Gustav MANnergeim], **Тур ХЕйердал** [Tur HEierdal] (but educated Russians normally say **БалатОн** [BalatOn], **ВисбАден** [VisbAden], “Сага о Форсайтах” **ГолсуОрси** [“Saga o Forsaitah” GolsuOrsi] – ‘The Forsyth Saga’ by Galsworthy, **ГутенБЕрг** [GutenbErg], **линия МАНнергЕйма** [liniya MannergEima] – Mannerheim Line).

We believe that recommending accentual and pronouncing variants which contradict Russian cultural traditions is contrary to the very purpose of codification as an important means of language policy. One of the key objectives of language policy is to preserve the cultural heritage of a nation and to keep it intact for the benefit of the generations to come. It is this particular purpose that the codification of the norm of a literary language is designed to serve. The codification stabilizes a literary language, helps it remain what it is for as long as possible. It unites the present and the past of the language, serving as a bridge between those who speak it now and those who spoke it years ago. Hence the biggest challenge of the codification is finding the happy medium: the preservation of traditional usage should be reasonably combined with the acceptance of new facts of language which have become stable and widely used in the speech of the educated stratum.

Accentual and pronouncing variants recommended for usage in mass media should match the expectations of most viewers and listeners. If a journalist, upon looking up certain proper names in the “Dictionary of Accentuation of the Russian Language” (1993) and finding recommendations like **БАли** [BAli], **Леонард БЕрнстайн** [Leonard BErnstain], **МАрлон Брандо** [MArlon BrAn-do], **ГернИка** [GernIka], **КАтынь** [KAryn’], **ЛИхтенштейн** [LIhten-

shtein], *Маннергейм* [MAnnergeim], *Сидней* [Sidnei], *СУботица* [SUbotica], *Тур ХЕйердал* [Tur HEierdal], chose to follow them, this would lower the prestige of the reporter in the eyes of the audience, since such a choice would clearly indicate the lack of cultural background.

The fact that young journalists are unaware of accentual and pronouncing variants which are traditional for educated individuals indicates a wider problem: it shows that certain radio and TV employees are not very familiar with the cultural traditions of Russia. For instance, in a recent screen version of a detective story by Agatha Christie shown on the TV channel “Kultura”, Giacomo Puccini's “La Boheme” is referred to as ‘Bohemia’, which means that none of the specialists involved (the interpreter, the editor of the Russian variant, the director of dubbing, the actors who dubbed the film) had ever heard of this opera, which, in fact, is rather popular among educated Russians.

Journalists for Radio Liberty keep referring to *РАдован Караджич* [RAdovan KarAdzhich] who is currently on trial at the International Tribunal in The Hague as *РАдован КАрадџич*. [RAdovan KAradzich]. When a listener called the radio and pointed out that this last name was being mispronounced, the host parried, stating that ‘accentuating the first syllable is correct, since it matches the norm of the Serbian language’. Unfortunately, this approach is quite common among journalists. Following this approach may in fact be qualified as a special type of substandard language. In this particular case the employees at Radio Liberty disregard the tradition which has long been established in the Russian language and culture: the politician on trial in The Hague is a namesake of *Вук Караджич* [Vuk KarAdzhich], the great Serbian enlightener, who is well known to the Russian intelligentsia. The journalist had also overlooked the fact that the word “*Караджич*” [KarAdzhich] was widely used in the media in the late 90s and the stress invariably fell on the second syllable. The Russian language is characterized by a tendency to rhythmical equilibrium and this fact is well known to linguists: the “stress in polysyllabic words shuns final syllables and aspires to get to a syllable in the middle of the word, as if it was keen not to distort the equilibrium of the word” (Vasilyev 1929). Stress shift from the first to the middle syllable in *Караджич* [Karadzich] exemplifies this tendency.

Earlier editions of the “Dictionary of Accentuation” used to follow the traditions of the languages of origin, also when selecting a pronouncing variant of a proper name: *Вильгельм Хауф* [Vil'gel'm Hauf] (though most of us are familiar with fairy tales written by *Гауф* [Gauf]), *Ханс Кристиан Андерсен* [Hans KristiAn Andersen]. Sometimes this may lead to amusing discrepancies.

The principal character in Eldar Ryazanov's film "Andersen. Life without love" is called **Ханс КрИстиан** [Hans KrIstian]. At a certain point though a large image of a fairy tale book is shown on screen bearing the name of: "Г.Х.Андерсен" [G.H.Andersen], thus reflecting the old Russian tradition of calling this writer **Ганс ХристиАн Андерсен** [Gans HristiAn Andersen], something that we are familiar with from our childhood years.

A TV host at one of the "Culture Channel" programs insisted on saying **Рёрих** [R'Orih], rather than **[РЭ]рих** [RErih], justifying this usage by the fact that this is a German family name. It is this particular pronouncing variant that is marked as the correct one in the "Big Encyclopedic Dictionary". In our view, one should refrain from using encyclopedias as reference books when in doubt which accentual or pronouncing variant to choose. This rule is to be observed when the words in question have been integral parts of the Russian cultural reality for many years. A guest on the "Апокрыфа" program kept calling the founder of psychoanalysis **Фройд** [Froid] because this, as he explained, is how this last name sounds in German (in the Russian language this scholar is called **Фрейд** [Freid]). Such variants as **Рёрих** [R'Orih] or **Фройд** [Froid] may be used by dramatic actors to create an image of a prim and proper character, but they are not to be used in the neutral register of TV programs.

Not a long time ago the "Culture Channel" broadcast a recording of violinist Maxim Vengerov's concert. When he was playing a piece by **Фриц Крейслер** [Fric Kreisler], this great Austrian composer was referred to in the subtitles as **Фриц Крайслер** [Fric Kraisler]. I do not think that it was the first time that the employees of "Culture Channel" had heard the name of this great virtuoso. In the 20th century he was invariably called **Крейслер** [Kreisler] in Russian, and not **Крайслер** [Kraisler]. This usage reflects an old Russian tradition – when borrowing German words, the diphthong [ai] transforms into [ei], cf.: **Лейпциг** [Leipcig], **Рейн** [Rein], **Альберт Эйнштейн** [Al'bert Einshtein]. Apparently the people who wrote "**Фриц Крайслер**" [Fric Kraisler] in the subtitles are not familiar with the hierarchy of criteria which should be applied in cases like this.

The "Dictionary of Exemplary Russian Accent" ("Словарь образцового русского ударения", Shtudiner 2009) differs from encyclopedias and certain linguistic dictionaries in that it recommends the variants with stable Russian pronouncing/accentual tradition, such as: **БалИ** [BaI], **ЛихтенишЕйн** [LihtenshtEin], **СидиЕй** [SidnEi]. These are the cases where encyclopedias would typically apply the etymological approach, without taking into consideration the Russian tradition: consistent accentual patterns of the Russian lan-

guage. Numerous poems written at different times and boasting different levels of artistic merit unambiguously prove the rightfulness of the choice made in the “Dictionary of Exemplary Russian Stress”:

На дивном острове **Бали**
 От мира шумного вдали
 Теряли голову в тиши
 Две романтические души ...
 (Габриэлла, 2004)¹

[Na divnom ostrove **Ball**
 Ot mira shumnogo vdali
 Teryali golovu v tishi
 Dve romantichnye dushi ...
 (Gabriella, 2004)];

Помахали верхушками ели
 И в заснеженной скрылись дали,
 Я летел к своей призрачной цели
 На таинственный остров **Бали** ...
 (Кубик Рубик, 2006)

[Pomahali verhushkami eli
 I v zasnezhennoi skrylis' dali,
 Ya letel k svoei prizrachnoi celi
 Na tainstvennyi ostrov **Ball** ...
 (Kubik Rubik, 2006)];

Она просилась на **Бали** –
 Я ей ответил: «Отвали!»
 (Серж Хара, 2007)

[Ona prosilas' na **Ball** –
 Ya ei otvetil: «Otvali!»
 (Serzh Hara, 2007)];

Было. Свой сборник возил на
Бали.
 Держался вполне пуповидно.
 Пальмы, мартышки, прибой,
 корабли ...
 Читателей, правда, не видно ...
 (Ксенин, 2008)

[Bylo. Svoi sbornik vozil na
Ball.
 Derzhalsya vpolne pupovidno.
 Pal'my, martyshki, priboi,
 korabli ...
 Chitatelei, pravda, ne vidno ...
 (Ksenin, 2008)];

Мы лежим, от счастья
 молчаливы,
 Замирает сладко детский дух.
 Мы в траве, вокруг синеют сливы,
 Мама **LichtenstEin** читает вслух.
 (Марина Цветаева, 1909)

[My lezhim, ot schast'ya
 molchalivy,
 Zamiraet sladko detskii duh.
 My v trave, vokrug sineyut slivy,
 Mama **LichtenstEin** chitaet vsluh.
 (Marina Cvetaeva, 1909)];

¹ Examples with the word ‘Bali’ are taken from www.stihi.ru, where amateur poets publicize their works.

Из **СиднЕя** в Судан,
 Из Судана в **СиднЕй**
 Гнал корабли из порта в порт.
 И под каждым выпелом –
 Звон цепей
 И смех павианий жирных морд ...
 (Сергей Обрадович, 1922)

[Iz **SidnEya** v Sudan,
 Iz Sudana v **SidnEi**
 Gnal korabli iz porta v port.
 I pod kazhdym vypelom –
 Zvon cepei
 I smeh pavianii zhirnyh mord ...
 (Sergei Obradovich, 1922)];

Взгляд
 на прощанье
 радуя,
 В дожде
 цветных огней
 Зажглась
 ночная радуга –
 Пылающий
 СиднЕй ...
 Стремительным
 движеньем
 Взметнувшийся
 до звёзд,
 Их чётким
 отраженьем
 Застыл
 сиднЕйский мост ...
 (Сергей Наровчатов, 1978)

[Vzglyad
 na proshan'e
 raduya,
 V dozhde
 cvetnyh ognei
 Zazhglas'
 nochnaya raduga –
 Pylayushii
 SidnEi ...
 Stremitel'nym
 dvizhen'em
 Vzmetnuvshiisya
 do zvezd,
 Ih chetkim
 otrazhen'em
 Zastyl
 sidnEiskii most ...
 (Sergei Narovchatov, 1978)];

В вечернем клубе я читал в
 СиднЕе,
 И на меня смотрели, сатанея,
 Капиталисты двадцати мастей ...
 „Скажите, там на севере, в России,
 Поэты все, как Пушкин ли, такие!“

[V vechernem klube ya chital v
 SidnEe,
 I na menya smotreli, sataneya,
 Kapitalisty dvadcati mastei ...
 “Skazhite, tam na severe, v Rossii,
 Poety vse, kak Pushkin li, takie!” –

И снова сел туда, откуда встал.
Я вспомнил Беллу, Роберта,
Андрея;
Хотел сказать „не все“, – но я в
Сиднее!
И я ответил: „Все“. И ахнул зал ...
(Евгений Евтушенко, 2003)

I snova sel tuda, otkuda vstal.
Ya vspomnil Bellu, Roberta,
Andreya;
Hotel skazat' "ne vse", – no ya v
SidnEe!–
I ya otvetil: "Vse". I ahnul zal ...
(Evgenii Evtushenko, 2003)];

Где-нибудь под диваном у них
Марсель или **Сидней** –
Пальмы, кабаки, смазливые
покладистые певички ...
С каждым годом всё упоительней,
всё больней
За тобой наблюдать, изучать
повадки твои, твои привычки ...
(Александр Танков, 2004)

[Gde-nibūd‘ pod divanom u nih
Marsel‘ ili **SidnEi** –
Pal‘my, kabaki, smazlivye
pokladistye pevichki ...
S kazhdym godom vse upoitel‘nei,
vse bol‘nei
Za toboi nablyudat‘, izuchat‘
povadki tvoji, tvoji privychki ...
(Aleksandr Tankov, 2004)];

Моим дыханьем ты была согрета.
Как я любил! – чем старше, тем
сильней.
(Уехать бы в какой-нибудь

СиднЕй,

Не дожидаясь нежного привета!)
(Виктор Пеленягрэ, 2005)

[Moim dyhan'em ty byla sogreta.
Kak ya lyubil! – chem starshe, tem
sil'nei.
(Uehat' by v kakoi-nibud'
SidnEi,
Ne dozhidayas' nezhnogo priveta!)
(Viktor Pelenyagre, 2005)];

Ты презираешь жизни невзгоды,
Смотришь часами прогноз погоды,
В Париже гроза, и в тумане
СиднЕй,
На Камчатке дожди, что
может быть важней?
(Светлана Борщенко, 2005)

[Ty preziraesh' zhizni nevzglyady,
Smotrish' chasami prognoz pogody,
V Parizhe groza, i v tumane
SidnEi,
Na Kamchatke dozhdi, chto
mozhet byt' vazhnei?
(Svetlana Borshenko, 2005)].

We haven't found any poems representing other accentual variants of the words *Бали* [Bali], *Лихтенштейн* [Lihtenshtein], *Сидней* [Sidnei].

A lot of Russian words go through periods when they have two equally acceptable variants, differing either in accentuation or pronunciation. These variants coexist within the literary norm. However, the "Dictionary of Stresses of the Russian Language" ("Словарь ударений русского языка"), aimed specifically at radio and television professionals, offers only one of these coexisting pronouncing or accentual variants. This does not mean, however, that the authors and editors of this specialized publication find only this particular variant correct. On the contrary, they accept the variability of the norm. The principle of 'one and only variant' is advocated by them in order to avoid discrepancies during broadcasting, such as the one mocked in a comic number, sung by renowned media announcers at D.E. Rosental's anniversary ceremony: "Собкор сказал 'КарАкас', а диктор – 'КаракАс'" ("The reporter said 'KarAkas', but the newsreader said 'KarakAs'"). Such situations commonly occur during live TV and radio programs every day. A newsreader for the news program "Time" ("Время") speaks of two Greek politicians called *Караманлис* [Karamanlis] (they are uncle and nephew), after which the reporter refers to the nephew using a slightly different name – *КарамАнлис* [KaramAnlis]. A TBC (TVC) analyst alternately calls the head of Sberbank of Russia *Г[рə]ф* [Gref] or *Г[ре]ф* [Gr'ef] in the course of a single broadcast. One of the "Chronicles" ("Историческая хроника") on 'Russia Channel' mentions the author of "Pygmalion" six times. Three times he is referred to as *Бернард Шоу* [BernArd Shou] and three times as *БЕРНАРД ШОУ* [BERnard Shou]. In the same program we learn that certain people come to *Эдинбург* [Edinburgh] and then stay *в ЭдинБурге* [EdinbUrgh]. Such discrepancies within one and the same broadcast are highly undesirable, being an impediment to adequate perception of information. As a result, the audience's attention shifts from the content of the program to its form.

The tradition of recommending only one pronouncing or accentual variant to mass media professionals originated in the very first pronouncing reference books for radio and TV. This tradition is based upon the works of Russian philologists of the late XIXth-early XXth centuries, who chose to give the norm status only to one of the coexisting variants.

Encyclopedic dictionaries often transliterate borrowed proper names, for example: *Рабиндранат Тагор (Тхакур)* [Rabindranat Tagor (Thakur)], *Вильгельм Хауф (Гауф)* [Vil'gel'm Hauf (Gauf)]. The "Dictionary of Exemplary Russian Accent" selects only one variant for use in the media in cases like this

as well, and preference is always given to the variant within the tradition of the Russian language: **Рабиндранат Тагор** [Rabindranat Tagor], **Вильгельм Гауф** [Vil'gel'm Gauф].

The “Dictionary of Exemplary Russian Accent” also selects a preferable variant in cases when variation in pronunciation is reflected in spelling: Телемах [Telemah] and **Телемак** [Telemak] (the variant suggested for the use in the media is given first; it is also underlined).

When choosing a pronouncing or accentual variant of a borrowed proper name, we believe a simple principle should be applied: one has to take the established Russian tradition into consideration. If a journalist is offered the honour of introducing a certain word into the Russian culture, and a linguist is to codify its pronunciation and accentuation in a dictionary, they should resort to the language of its origin.

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